



"[air navigation control, [...] is a task involving the exercise of public authority and is not of an economic nature, since that activity constitutes a service in the public interest which is intended to protect both the users of air transport and the populations affected by aircraft flying over them".
(Extract of decision C.364/92 of the European Court of Justice).

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60th ATCEUC Committee Meeting Final Communiqué

It is with great pleasure that ATCEUC held its 60th Committee Meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, during 26-28 April.

We have been honoured to have the presence of the Bosnian Minister of Transport and the deputy Mayor of Sarajevo who gave interesting views on the ATM and shared their experiences as travellers.

Interaction with the airspace users' representative bodies is essential to shape our policies and, in this regard, we exchanged views with A4E's Policy Director, stressing that despite the fact that ATCOs and pilots cooperate fully and effectively, various actors in the industry and the EC influence in ways that are not always productive. Works are currently taking place at high levels and we salute the opportunity to share common positions on the future of our beloved resilient aviation. We took on board with great interest the KEO project bearing in mind that transparency in data and mutual trust can only help everyone in efficiency while maintaining high safety standards.

We note with apprehension the apparent political statement by EUROCONTROL, putting pressure on the right to strike with biased publications such as the aviation trends issue #1 whilst promoting the low-cost model in their latest forecast published the 31st of March 2023. Once again, ATCEUC stresses that you can't have cheap, efficient and safe ATS – you can only pick two.

Fatigue and its management were at the centre of our meeting and will continue to be of immense importance in the years to come. Best practises on roster planning and human resource management were presented, based on scientific data and methodology. Both EUROCONTROL and EASA are working towards prescribing more specific rules in the ATS.OR.320 of the regulation 373/2017. With big interest, we took notice of the Swiss study's results on retirement age. It was one of the occasions

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where we can feel that this subject and, more especially, the cognitive decrease on elders is something that worries the controllers all over Europe and, in the end, can affect the job attractiveness. This study showed, that a good Social Dialogue can lead to commonly shared on-the-point recommendations to tackle the problem of aging workforce in ATM. We acknowledge the need for more of these studies in different environments, to ensure appropriate retirement age and social conditions across states. Healthy Social Dialogue is a prerequisite to ensure both safety and staff well-being.

While we appreciated the common work on this study, we were saddened to learn that once again a trial against a Swiss Air Traffic Controller ended with a conviction. ATCEUC strongly condemns these trials as a clear violation of the Just Culture policy.

Our colleagues in Finland, Spain, Denmark and Albania are still facing problems caused by inefficient or catastrophic management at political and corporate levels. For instance, Privatization of such a key sector for the benefit of a few corporations is a non-sense and can impair safety. We will continue to support ATCOs in these countries in all the possible ways.

Unfortunately, our predictions for ATCOs shortage in Europe are the reality faced by most ANSPs. Mechanistic and reactive cost cuts to respond to current conditions while disregarding long term effects are not viable. ATM is a marathon, not a sprint. Wrong European Commission and ANSP decisions lead to a capacity deficit and increased delays, the effects of which will be felt across Europe during the coming summer. Pressure for excessive overtime, extra shifts and forcing ATCOs to work on their free days are already being applied, potentially endangering safety due to the significant increase of Fatigue.

ATCEUC will remain focused on the future challenges European aviation will face in the next few years. Mutual trust has to be preserved in order to maintain the highest level of safety in the interest of all European citizens. Only by mutual understanding we can reach common goal. Automation, digitalization and other trendy terms must not take the focus away from the real requirements to safely and efficiently handle the increased traffic demand: adequate ATCO staffing, improved working conditions and effective social dialogue.

Sarajevo, 28 April 2023